

Sudan's president, Salva Kiir. Mr. Abdel Aziz also said that if things don't change, "fires will just break out everywhere, here, in Blue Nile, in Darfur," according to someone at the meeting.

"We, the people of Sudan, are ready to remove them," vowed Mr. Abdel Aziz, the person said. "We have guns."

Josh Kron contributed reporting from Parieng, Sudan.

#### INTRODUCTION OF FIRE GRANTS REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2011

#### HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 22, 2011*

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation to support our Nation's first responders. The Fire Grants Reauthorization Act of 2011 reauthorizes two programs—the Assistance for Firefighters Grant, AFG, Program and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response, SAFER, program—that were created to help local fire departments across the country maintain and increase their capabilities to do all that is asked of them, including fighting fires and responding to medical emergencies and disasters.

Maintaining the equipment, training, and personnel to safely and swiftly respond to calls for assistance is increasingly difficult. Fire departments around the country have been forced to lay off firefighters and do without needed equipment and training. The fire grant programs have played an important role in helping local fire departments overcome some of these challenges, providing over \$6 billion in assistance since 2000. These grants have been essential to maintaining public safety in many communities.

Fire is a serious problem in the United States, killing over 3,000 people a year—a rate higher than all other industrialized countries. In addition, approximately 20,000 people are injured, over 100 firefighters are killed in the line of duty, and \$10 billion in property is lost each year due to fire. Statistics show that minorities and low-income Americans are disproportionately the victims of fires. In addition to providing the resources necessary to ensure our fire departments have the equipment and personnel they need, the AFG program supports fire prevention and safety activities to help reduce the numbers of death, injury, and loss.

The bill I am introducing today is nearly identical to the bill that moved through the Science and Technology Committee and then passed the House by an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote last Congress.

The good news is that, even in these times of increasing partisanship, this common sense bill has once again garnered widespread support. I am pleased to be joined by the bipartisan co-chairs of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus in introducing the Fire Grants Reauthorization Act, along with other members from both sides of the aisle who have long supported these important programs.

We need to ensure that our firefighters and emergency medical personnel have the tools that they need to protect us. This legislation will do just that.

As the Ranking Member of the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee,

which has jurisdiction over these programs, I look forward to working with my colleagues to put this important bill on the fast track and ensure that these critical programs are reauthorized as expeditiously as possible.

#### CONGRATULATING CHRISTOPHER ERBE FOR OBTAINING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

#### HON. SANDY ADAMS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 22, 2011*

Mrs. ADAMS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Christopher Erbe for achieving the rank of Eagle Scout.

Throughout the history of the Boy Scouts of America, the rank of Eagle Scout has only been attained through dedication to concepts such as honor, duty, country and charity. By applying these concepts to daily life, Christopher has proven his true and complete understanding of their meanings, and thereby deserves this honor.

I offer my congratulations on a job well done and best wishes for the future.

#### IN RECOGNITION OF NAVESINK HOOK AND LADDER COMPANY NUMBER 1

#### HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 22, 2011*

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Navesink Hook and Ladder Company #1 of Middletown, New Jersey, as its members gather to celebrate its 125th Anniversary. Since its founding in 1886, Navesink Hook and Ladder Company has faithfully protected the local residents, businesses and visitors of the Township. Their honorable and courageous actions are undoubtedly deserving of this body's recognition.

The Navesink Hook and Ladder Company was founded on May 1, 1886 and remains an all-volunteer organization. Throughout their rich history, the members of this fire company have exemplified their unwavering dedication and service toward members of the community. They have risked their lives to respond to various emergencies involving fire, carbon monoxide, motor vehicle accidents and other various rescues. Their responsibilities have begun to expand beyond the borders of Middletown and have also assisted neighboring towns including Highlands, Rumson, Fair Haven, Keansburg, Sea Bright and Atlantic Highlands. Navesink Hook and Ladder Company promotes a proud and longstanding history of valor and sacrifice. Their heroic actions while serving their community is a testament to the selfless actions of the members to protect and serve the residents of Middletown. The members of this fire company continue to exemplify their unwavering dedication and service for their fellow citizens and community.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring Navesink Hook and Ladder Company #2 on its 125th Anniversary and thanking the men and women who have served and protected the Township of Middletown.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF REV. BEN COX, SR., ORIGINAL FREEDOM RIDER

#### HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 22, 2011*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life of a trail-blazer and humanitarian, Reverend Ben Elton Cox, Sr. Reverend Cox's life mission was to fight for the equal rights of blacks in southern states where Jim Crow laws and intimidation tactics hindered and denied blacks the right to beaches, hotels, schools, restaurants, and jobs that whites enjoyed. Though confronted with hatred, violence and blatant racial discrimination, Reverend Cox's courageous acts and unyielding belief in equality for all people subsequently effected change across this country.

Reverend Cox was a fervent community activist and devoted NAACP member. He was not only a leader of the Freedom Rides in Little Rock, but was one of the original 13 Riders on the first Congress of Racial Equality Freedom Ride in 1961. His role during the movement helped amplify the voice of oppressed blacks in the south and shape future civil rights policy in the United States that would advance the rights and freedoms of African Americans.

Family, friends, and freedom riders described Reverend Cox as one of the young Americans who repeatedly exhibited courage and bravery in the cause of Civil Rights. Ben Cox and 12 others faced violent opposition and discord from Klansmen and angry mobs during the Freedom Rides traveling throughout the south. In his own words, Reverend Cox said he'd been in 37 states for civil rights and in jail 17 times and that his life had been threatened 87 times in writing. Sacrificing their safety and endangering the lives of their families—harassed, jailed and brutally beaten by their detractors, Reverend Cox and the Freedom Riders were on the "front line" of a civil war and remained steadfast in the fight against racism, discrimination and inequality in the segregated south and around the country. Ben Cox embodied courage and was a champion of the struggle for human rights.

Again, I ask that my colleagues please join me in saluting the life and legacy of Civil Rights leader and Freedom Rider Rev. Benjamin "Elton" Cox, Sr.

#### ELECTION SUPPORT CONSOLIDATION AND EFFICIENCY ACT

SPEECH OF

#### HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 21, 2011*

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today I voted against H.R. 672, a bill that ends the Election Assistance Commission (EAC), an independent and bipartisan commission whose main function is to improve and oversee elections in the U.S.

This bill would transfer much of the EAC's responsibilities and funds to the Federal Elections Commission (FEC), whose main priority